

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 05004 010848Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 ORM-02 DHA-02 /075 W

-----026973 010923Z /17

R 010419Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8305

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KUALA LUMPUR 5004

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, MY, RP

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR A SABAH CLAIM SETTLEMENT

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 4948

1. LOCAL PRESS JULY 29 CARRIED REUTER ITEM FROM MANILA REPORTING THAT FOLLOWING A JULY 28 MEETING THE HEIRS OF SULTAN OF SULU HAD RENOUNCED THEIR CLAIM TO SABAH AND HAD GIVEN PRESIDENT FERDINAND MARCOS AUTHORITY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE REPORT, AN MFA SPOKESMAN SAID, "IT IS INTERESTING AND WE WILL STUDY IT," BUT DECLINED FURTHER COMMENT. (REUTER REPORTED FROM MANILA JULY 30 CLARIFICATION BY ONE OF THE HEIRS TO EFFECT THAT THEY HAD NOT RENOUNCED CLAIM BUT HAD ENTRUSTED "SOVEREIGN" RIGHTS TO THE PHILIPPINES GOVERNMENT AND HAD EMPOWERED MARCOS TO REPRESENT THEIR "PROPRIETARY" RIGHTS.)

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2. FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN WAS SIMILARLY NONCOMMITTAL WHEN REPORTERS APPROACHED HIM ON SUBJECT JULY 29, REPORTEDLY INDICATING MATTER WAS "BEYOND HIS LEVEL" AND COULD ONLY BE HANDLED AT THE TOP LEVEL; I.E., BETWEEN MARCOS AND PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN. RITHAUDDEEN REFUSED TO COMMENT WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE ISSUE WOULD BE DISCUSSED ON A BILATERAL

BASIS DURING THE ASEAN SUMMIT A FEW DAYS HENCE.

3. ON ARRIVING IN KUALA LUMPUR JULY 31, PHILIPPINE FOREIGN MINISTER ROMULO REPORTEDLY TOLD NEWMEN THAT MARCOS WILL VISIT SABAH AUGUST 9 TO RECIPROCATATE SABAH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARRIS SALLEH'S RECENT VISIT TO MANILA. HE ALSO SAID THAT MARCOS WAS NOW HOLDING A SERIES OF PUBLIC HEARINGS TO ASCERTAIN PUBLIC SENTIMENTS ON THE SABAH CLAIM.

4. COMMENT: PRESS SPECULATION CONTINUES TO SUGGEST A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IS IMMINENT, FUELED MAINLY BY STREAM OF UPBEAT NEWS ITEMS OUT OF MANILA. ONLY SOUR NOTE IN RECENT DAYS WAS FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN'S WARNING IN HIS REGULAR WEEKLY "AS I SEE IT" COLUMN IN JULY 25 "STAR" THAT THIS IS BUT A RUSE BY MARCOS TO ISOLATE THE MNLF, AND THAT SABAH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARRIS MAY HAVE EXCEEDED HIS AUTHORITY BY RESPONDING TOO POSITIVELY TO MARCOS' OVERTURES. THE UNKU (AN ALLY OF HARRIS' RIVAL TUN MUSTAPHA) ALSO EXPRESSED HE HOPE THAT HARRIS DID NOT "SEAL THE FATE" OF THE "FILIPINO POLITICAL REFUGEES" IN SABAH BY AGREEING TO SEND THEM BACK TO THE PHILIPPINES.

MILLER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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